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# *Transportation*

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## **Background**

As one of the City's largest areas both geographically and in terms of population size, Neighborhood Nine has significant transportation needs and problems. Twenty three percent of its households do not own an automobile. These residents must rely on walking, bicycling, transit services or rides from friends or family to reach their destinations.

Public transit serves the neighborhood at several nodes and corridors. The MBTA Red Line stations serve the neighborhood directly at Harvard Square and Porter Square, and less directly via Alewife and Davis Square. Several bus lines serve the main thoroughfares in or near the neighborhood, including Massachusetts Avenue (77, 96); Concord Avenue (72, 74, 78) and Rindge Avenue (83). The presence of the railroad tracks along the neighborhood's northern boundary has created barriers to transit access and serious safety problems for residents, particularly those in or near the Walden Square apartments.

The City's high density and car ownership heightens the problem of parking. Changing household and family patterns — more unrelated adults, more family members with cars — has resulted in more people searching for fewer parking spaces. The presence of popular commercial shopping corridors, such as Massachusetts Avenue, also brings residents and non-residents of the neighborhood into competition for scarce parking.

The City has taken a number of steps to improve transportation access while protecting the urban and natural environment. As part of state

efforts to meet Clean Air Act requirements in the late 1970s, the state imposed a commercial parking freeze on the downtown business district of the City of Boston. Concerned that commuters to Boston would use Cambridge as a "parking lot," the City opted into an extension of the parking freeze into Cambridge. This method has proven to be a hardship for the City to administer while still furthering economic development goals. Furthermore, the air quality benefits of such a strategy have proven to be marginal at best. In order to provide better air quality improvements and to address economic development concerns, the City instituted an aggressive commuter mobility program in the City during the early 1990s. These efforts were further promoted by passage of the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance in June, 1992 and the establishment of the Cambridge Environmental Program to implement suggested trip reduction measures. In recognition of its close working relationships with the Community Development Department (CDD), the Environmental Program was reorganized and incorporated into the Environmental and Transportation Planning Division (E&TP) of CDD.

Commuter mobility staff work with local employers to reduce single occupancy commuter trips through support for ridesharing and transit use, establishment of shuttle services and initiation of bicycle and pedestrian incentives. Other activities in which E&TP staff are involved include improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities and public transportation service in Cambridge, as well as undertaking traffic calming measures to

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discourage through traffic and encourage mode switches for short trips. A major component of the City's program involves creating bicycle lanes and guidelines for bicyclists and improving crosswalks and traffic signals for pedestrians. E&TP staff also coordinate the work of the City's Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Cambridge Bicycle Committee.

### Survey Results

About half of all telephone survey respondents viewed a lack of parking and traffic congestion as major concerns in the neighborhood. When asked about these issues on Massachusetts Avenue specifically, more residents considered them to be major concerns: 57% for traffic congestion, 54% for parking along Massachusetts Avenue. Longer term residents are more likely to view traffic congestion as a major concern.

### Committee Discussions

Study Committee members discussed issues of access, traffic management, parking, and promotion and protection of non-vehicular travel modes, such as bicycling and walking. They also examined the need for better enforcement of existing regulations in these areas.

Transportation access to destinations such as grocery stores, jobs and City services was a considerable concern to Study Committee members. The lack of regular and accessible public transit in lower income sections of the neighborhood was noted. Improving such connections was supported as an important means to promote equality within the neighborhood. It is also a question of safety. Participants called on the School Department to examine the eligibility criteria for bus service, noting that children living in Walden Square and attending Fitzgerald School are not eligible for bus services, and walk to school over the railroad tracks.

The Study Committee also discussed the extension of shuttle or "paratransit" services to reach residents in the larger, mixed income housing developments such as Walden Square, Lincoln Way and Briston Arms. If established,

the routes should provide better connections to shopping centers offering affordable grocery stores, or to bus and rapid transit lines with direct access to affordable grocery stores. Specific routes discussed included:

- Porter Square and Alewife Station via Walden Street to Sherman Street to Rindge Avenue
- from Porter Square, up Upland road to Huron Avenue, right on Concord Avenue, past the Homestead to Alewife Station
- A circular route along Upland Road from Porter Square, over to Concord street and back along Walden Street to Massachusetts Avenue and Porter Square.

Study Committee members discussed approaching the owners of Briston Arms and Walden Square Apartments to contribute to the operation of a shuttle service. Participants also called for improved marketing (and expansion) of existing routes by SCM, the current provider of community shuttle services. Their services should be expanded to the elderly, disabled persons and linguistic minorities, both in the neighborhood and City-wide.

Management of traffic flow, to make residential streets more livable and commercial corridors vital, was discussed. A major concern was the use of residential streets as "cut-through" by drivers with destinations elsewhere. Study Committee members recommended that the City explore rerouting some streets to prevent cars from cutting through the neighborhood. They also explored the prospects for "calming" of traffic flow by changing some two way streets to one way, such as Hurlburt and Mt. Pleasant Streets and Buena Vista Park. Speed bumps and landscaped traffic circles were also suggested to slow down vehicles on residential streets.

In a similar vein, Study Committee members discussed road improvements on a number of unsafe intersections, whether through signs, lights or reconstruction. These included Massachusetts Avenue and Upland Road, Linnaean and Garden, and Sherman Street at Danahy Park/Walden Square Road.

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Study Committee members also raised the issue of City vehicles, such as refuse or recycling trucks, slowing traffic flow during morning hours of pick-up. They suggested exploring pick-up after morning rush hour, or initiating a rule that if three or four cars are standing behind the truck, then the truck must move out of the way. The problem of delivery trucks blocking traffic was also discussed. Study Committee members recommended restrictions on truck delivery times to businesses and limits on the amount of time that trucks can idle.

Drivers who violate existing laws governing parking also raised member concerns. Double parked or illegally parked cars, particularly on Massachusetts Avenue, create serious safety and traffic flow problems, as do patrons of some businesses, such as Bruegger's Bagels, who park on the no-parking side of Upland Road. Participants stressed the need to ticket promptly all double-parked and illegally parked cars. An area needing particular enforcement is Garden Street, as well as areas where cars parked in the right-hand lane impede cars and buses turning right.

To reduce the incidence of non-residents occupying resident spaces illegally, Study Committee members suggested that the City ask the State Legislature to increase fines for vehicles in resident permit only areas. They argued that the fines for these tickets should be much higher than for tickets issued at meters; currently meter tickets are \$10 (\$20 for second ticketing,) yet resident parking tickets are \$15. Study Committee members suggested raising the resident parking fine to \$25 or \$30.

Study Committee members examined the obstacles faced by pedestrians and bicyclists in an

automotive environment, as well as possible strategies to balance the rights of cyclists, walkers and drivers. They noted a number of safety problems for walkers, particularly along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor, and pointed to pedestrians caught between the MBTA station and Lancaster Street. Study Committee members recommended that the City fix walking impediments, such as cracked sidewalks or missing or loose bricks, quickly. The City should also consider setting up a hot line similar to the pot hole hot line so residents can report problems easily. The problem of snow blocking pedestrian access was discussed, with suggestions for better enforcement of snow removal from sidewalks. Roadway enhancements to slow traffic on some streets, noted above, would also aid pedestrians. The need to rebuild a railroad underpass for pedestrians crossing near Walden Square Apartments was also discussed (see Urban Design).

Study Committee members discussed the need to protect cyclists from harm while ensuring that they observe traffic rules responsibly. They suggested that the City undertake a study to determine how other municipalities regulate bicycle usage. The need to enforce existing laws was noted. Bicyclists traveling the wrong way on one-way streets should be fined, as do those who fail to ride single file on City streets. At the same time, bicycle use should be encouraged through expansion of bike paths, better bike parking facilities and bicycle safety programs, as well as a bicycle registration program. Study Committee members pointed out hazardous areas, such as Porter Square, where roadway reconfigurations and changes in traffic patterns are needed to aid both bicyclists and walkers.

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# *Traffic, Parking and Transportation Recommendations*

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***I. Consider changing some existing two-way streets to one-way***

- Possibilities for consideration include Hurlburt and Mt. Pleasant Streets and Buena Vista Park

***II. Manage traffic flow to keep through traffic (no destination within the neighborhood) to main thoroughfares***

***III. Address the problem of non-residents parking illegally on residential streets***

***IV. Explore the possibility of changing hours of resident trash removal to after the morning rush hour***

***V. Consider instituting traffic calming techniques to slow traffic on neighborhood streets***

***VI. Support the establishment of shuttle/paratransit services to areas of the neighborhood not now adequately served by existing public transportation, especially Lincoln Way, Walden Square, Walden Park Apartments and Briston Arms housing developments***

***VII. Increase awareness of and expand SCM Community Transportation Services***

***VIII. Improve pedestrian/bicycle safety and access through enforcement of existing regulation, expansion of programs to encourage walking and bicycling***

***IX. Improve, through signage, lights or reconstruction, at unsafe intersections:***

- Garden Street beyond Walden to Field Street

- Walden and Richdale (install pedestrian crossing signal)
- Linnaean and Garden
- Sherman at Danchy Park/Walden Square Road
- Raymond and Richdale at Walden Square Road
- Garden and Concord at Arsenal Square
- Newell Street at Upland Road (install a Yield sign on Newell)
- Massachusetts Avenue and Upland Road
- Massachusetts Avenue southbound turning left onto Roseland Street

***X. Pursue a comprehensive street enhancement program to help control the speed of traffic, discourage through traffic and enhance pedestrian flow by the use of landscaped traffic circles and speed humps***

***XI. Improve enforcement of existing parking and traffic laws which regulate double parking, illegal use of resident parking spaces, parking in no-parking zones, and moving violations***

## **Growth Policy Context**

Policies 20 through 22 address traffic flow and the need to restrict non-residential traffic to main thoroughfares, not neighborhood streets, as far as possible. Shuttles or paratransit services to supplement public transportation are addressed by Policy 19. Measures to encourage non-automotive forms of travel, and to minimize conflicts with cars, are the subject of Policy 23.

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# Housing

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## Background

Neighborhood Nine has a total of 5495 housing units densely distributed at 26 units per acre. One in four (27%) of the units are located in condominium buildings and 28% are located in privately owned multifamily buildings. Neighborhood Nine's four subsidized housing developments have 478 housing units, which constitute 9% of the total housing units in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Nine has had a larger percentage of home owners than the City of Cambridge both in 1980 and 1990. The percentage of residents owning their own home in Neighborhood Nine rose substantially from 25% in 1980 to 34% in 1990 while the city's ownership rate rose from 23% in 1980 to 30% in 1990. The single family and condominium sales price in Neighborhood Nine has more than doubled between 1984 and 1992. The single family sales price rose from \$170,000 to \$356,000 and the condominium price increased from \$74,900 to \$168,000.

## NON PROFIT HOUSING INITIATIVES

### Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA)

The CHA owns and operates two developments in Neighborhood Nine: 60 units of family housing on Lincoln Way and a 24 unit development on Linnaean Street reserved for elderly residents.

### City Housing Programs

City housing programs include home improvement and home ownership programs, multifamily rehabilitation programs, and support for affordable

housing development initiatives (*See Appendix for list of City housing programs*).

## Federal Housing Programs

Neighborhood Nine has two housing developments (Briston Arms and Walden Square) which were originally developed in the 1970's under a federal housing program that provided owners of apartment buildings with low-interest, 40-year mortgages. In return, the owners agreed to keep rents affordable for low- and moderate-income residents. Unfortunately, provisions in these loans allowed owners to prepay the mortgages after 20 years and terminate the affordability restrictions.

In 1990, the federal government established a preservation program to protect the long-term affordability of these projects. Currently, the federal preservation program (also known as the expiring use program) is undergoing major modifications. The modifications will allow owners to prepay their mortgages and convert properties to market-rate housing. The changes may also affect the project-based Section 8 subsidy program.

Bristol Arms has participated in the Federal Preservation Program, and its affordability is ensured through 2018. In September 1994, the city played a key role in facilitating an agreement between the owner of Bristol Arms, tenants of the development, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). The owner has agreed to invest a substantial sum in physical improvements to the property. The 240-



unit Waden Square development faces risks to its long-term affordability. The owner may be able to prepay the federally-insured mortgage, but an affordable use restriction will remain in place for the original 40-year term. The City is monitoring the federal agreements related to affordability.

A third federally-assisted housing development, Walden Park Apartments, received federal mortgage insurance, and in return, HUD regulated the rents. While not specifically targeted for low- and moderate-income tenants, the rent regulation kept the rents low and affordable for lower income households. In 1995, HUD deregulated the property as allowed under the program regulations. The tenants contested the decision, which was upheld after a HUD review. In 1996, the City's Board of Zoning Appeal has determined that the owner is obligated to establish below-market rents as a condition for the original zoning variances granted to the project. The owner is challenging this decision.

### Survey Results

The 1993 Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc. telephone survey revealed that the majority of low-income residents call for more rental opportunities, whereas a majority of moderate-income respondents say home ownership opportunities are needed more. One out of five high-income respondents felt that neither type of housing was needed.

#### *Housing Opportunities Needed (by Income)*

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
More Rental Housing	60%	27%	47%	24%
More Home Ownership	23%	58%	14%	39%
Both Needed	16%	14%	37%	16%
None/Neither	1%	1%	3%	21%

*Source: Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc.  
(telephone survey, 1993)*

The majority of respondents see both rental costs and housing prices as a major concern in the neighborhood. Fifty-two percent of the respondents listed displacement as a major concern. As

income increases, the proportion of residents who see this as a major concern in the neighborhood decreases.

#### *Concerns About Displacement Due to High Housing Costs (by Income)*

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
Major Concern	72%	72%
	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
Minor Concern	40%	41%

*Source: Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc.  
(telephone survey, 1993)*

Eighty-four percent of respondents do not think they can afford to buy a house in Neighborhood Nine. Fifty-eight percent of high income renters said they could not afford to buy a house in the neighborhood. Survey respondents listed housing prices, displacement due to high housing costs, and rental costs as the major housing concerns in the neighborhood.

### Committee Discussions

The Study Committee discussed the various ways that affordable housing is made available in the city. There was a discussion about both the advantages of developing home ownership projects versus rental programs and the most cost effective way to provide residents with affordable housing.

The Study Committee differed on the best way to maintain an economically diverse resident population in the city. It was suggested that rental resources would be adversely affected if the City continues to expand home ownership programs. The Study Committee emphasized the need for the City to tap into whatever housing funds are available and to create a balance between affordable rental and home ownership opportunities. The Study Committee agreed that affordable housing programs should be geared towards resident families who need access to a variety of housing choices in order to continue living in the City.

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# *Housing Recommendations*

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***I. The City should continue limited-equity home ownership programs to promote home ownership for residents with low- and moderate incomes.***

***II. The City should identify properties within the neighborhood that may provide opportunities for limited equity development.***

- lot near Bellis Circle
- storage site on Concord Avenue
- “bird house” on Walden Street

***III. The City should identify distressed properties that may provide opportunities for rehabilitation and conversion into affordable housing.***

***IV. The City should support policies and programs that offer equitable solutions for expiring use housing and would not force residents to leave the City because of housing costs.***

***V. The City should consider giving floor area ratio (FAR) bonuses to owners of proposed mixed-use developments located in commercial districts which include a significant low-income housing component.***

***VI. The City should consider giving FAR bonuses to developers who build multiple-unit housing with deed restrictions requiring the housing to maintain affordable occupancy.***

***VII. Encourage the construction of low-income housing where possible on appropriate sites.***

***VIII. Continue to invest in home rehabilitation programs.***

## **Growth Policy Context**

Housing policy #29 encourages the city to concentrate its rehabilitation efforts on existing housing stock which will provide housing for low- and moderate-income resident families. Housing policy #31 encourages the promotion of affordable housing opportunities whenever feasibly possible.

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# *Economic Development and Employment*

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## **Background**

The Cambridge economy, once dedicated to the making of basic goods, such as steel, footwear and confections, now specializes in the delivery of knowledge based services, such as education, research and new product development. The shift can be seen by comparing the City's employment base in 1950 to 1990. Four decades ago, one in three jobs was in manufacturing industries; in 1990, it was less than one in ten. The Cambridge economy of 1950 primarily employed people who lived and worked in the same community. Today, only about one in five Cambridge jobs is held by a Cambridge resident; the labor market is truly a regional one.

These shifts accelerated in the 1980's. A 1991 survey of 91 employers found that the leading growth sectors locally were in new, knowledge based firms, led by business services such as research and consulting, and emerging technology innovators such as software, biotechnology and specialty materials. The survey also found that knowledge based industries have higher average requirements for employee education and training than their predecessors in traditional manufacturing. Many require a minimum of a year or more of college education for even entry level positions.

Education, the city's leading employer, has also provided facilities, staff and ideas to fuel hundreds of such firms. Over 25 start-up firms have been founded here using Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) licensed technology, primarily in biotechnology and medical science. MIT receives an average of 100 patents

per year. In 1993 alone, Harvard University licensed more than 50 technologies to industry.

A major challenge for the City is retaining these valuable employers beyond the start up stage, when they begin to look for locations that offer lower costs and more abundant land than an urban area such as Cambridge readily provides. Areas once dedicated to basic industries, such as Alewife, offer opportunities for the City to retain growing firms as they mature into the manufacturing stage, and create jobs for residents at a range of skill levels. The City's Emerging Technology Partnership Program combines assistance with finance, regulations, and site location to help make this vision a reality. The City also offers a variety of employment training and educational services to match the needs of new industries with the skills of the resident work force.

How do these trends match the situation of residents in Cambridge, and in Neighborhood Nine in particular? On average, neighborhood residents are employed in occupations that are growing or secure, and well paying, such as professional, technical and executive positions. City-wide, Cambridge residents are concentrated in professional occupations and industries, with education and related knowledge-based sectors predominating. Serious gaps between economic opportunities and resident preparation exist, however. Residents lacking a post-secondary education face limited opportunities, based on the employer survey noted above. A survey of local employment practitioners also revealed that many Cambridge youth, recent immigrants, older and

displaced workers and persons with limited English abilities faced special obstacles in the local economy. Obstacles to work force success included poor academic preparation, communication skills and low “job readiness,” or skills in job hunting, resume writing and interviewing. A lack of affordable day care and employer inexperience with diversity also hinders some applicants. Training professionals are attempting to meet these needs by moving towards a comprehensive approach that bundles job and skills training with child care, English as a Second Language, literacy training and support for trainees once on the job.

### Survey and US Census Results

Data from the 1993 Atlantic Survey and the 1990 Census provide further insights on neighborhood economic status. While the neighborhood on the whole is well served by the economy, there are important gaps between racial groups and between the lower income area north of Upland Road, and its higher income counterpart to the south.

### Education

Attainment of education beyond high school, as noted, is critical to success in the new economy. Seven in ten Neighborhood Nine residents (aged 25 or older) have a bachelor’s degree or higher education; nearly 85% have at least some or more college education. Only seven percent of Neighborhood Nine adults have attained less than a high school degree.

While White, Asian and Hispanic residents of Neighborhood Nine are extremely well educated (at least three in four adults in each race have college degrees), Black residents fall behind. Less than 30% of the neighborhood’s Black population aged 25 and up has attained a college degree, and nearly 20% have not completed high school. Residents living north of Upland Road are twice as likely to have lower education levels than those to the south.

### Economic Comparison:

#### Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge 1990

##### *Education (adults 25 years of age and up)*

	<i>Neighborhood 9</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>
Less than 9th Grade	2.6%	7.1%
9-12th grade, no diploma	4.2%	8.6%
High School diploma or GED	10.5%	15.8%
Some college, no degree/Associates	13.1%	14.3%
Bachelor’s degree or higher education	69.5%	54.2%

*Source: 1990 U.S. Census*

##### *Education by Race: Neighborhood 9 (adults 25 years of age and up)*

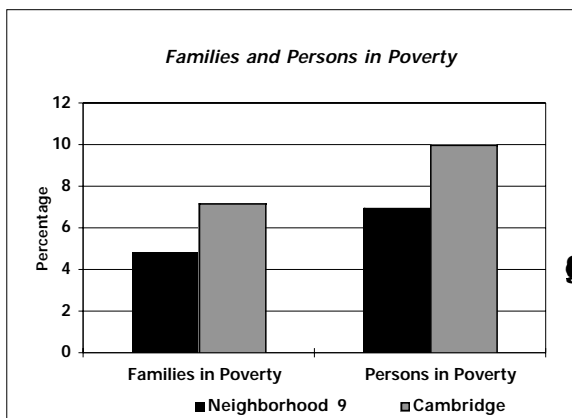
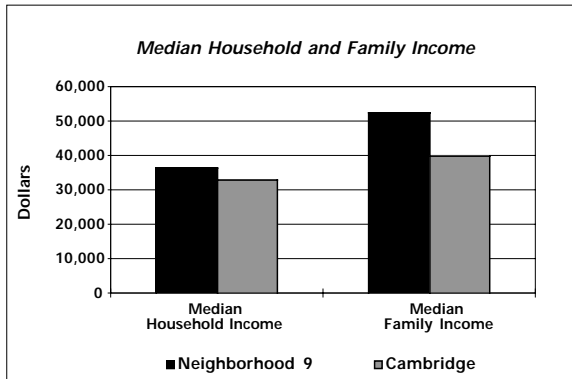
	<i>All</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>
Less than High School	6.8%	5.0%	18.2%	10.1%	3.3%
High School diploma or GED	10.5%	8.4%	27.9%	2.0%	0.0%
Some college, no degree/Associates	13.1%	11.9%	25.7%	2.0%	18.3%
Bachelor’s degree or higher education	69.5%	74.6%	28.1%	85.9%	78.4%

*Source: 1990 U.S. Census*

### Income and Poverty

Median family income in Neighborhood Nine is about one third higher than family incomes city-wide. Only 5% of Neighborhood Nine families earn incomes below poverty, compared to 7% city-wide.

**Economic Comparisons:  
Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge**



Source: 1990 U.S. Census

**Unemployment Rates**

Neighborhood Nine residents were unemployed at rates similar, though slightly higher, than persons throughout Cambridge: 5.8% versus 5.1%. Black residents of Neighborhood Nine fared worse than other races, with over 8% out of work, similar to the situation for Blacks city-wide, where 9% were jobless in 1990. Unemployment rates city-wide have dropped since 1990, the unemployment rate in June, 1996 was 3.1%.

**Economic Comparisons:  
Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge**

	Neighborhood 9	Cambridge
All Races	5.8%	5.1%
White	4.6%	4.6%
Black	8.1%	8.8%
Hispanic	3%	7.4%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

**Occupation**

Neighborhood Nine residents, as noted, are concentrated in the higher paying, faster growing fields that demand high levels of formal education. Forty two percent work in “professional” occupations such as teaching, software engineering or regional planning. Another 22% command executive or administrative roles; residents include the heads of high technology manufacturing or financial consulting firms. A little less than half of the city-wide work force are employed in either professional or executive positions. While nearly half (38%) of North of Upland workers are employed in professional specialties, 48% of those to the South are so employed. Few Neighborhood Nine residents (about one in twenty) work in lower paying service occupations, such as janitorial or dish washing work.

**Economic Comparisons:  
Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge**

Occupation	Neighborhood 9	Cambridge
Executive/Managerial	21.5%	15.8%
Professional	41.5%	31.2%
Technical	5.7%	8%
Sales	7.5%	7.3%
Clerical	11.9%	15.6%
Service Occupations	5.9%	11.3%
Skilled Trades/Repair	2.2%	4.5%
Semi-skilled/unskilled labor	3.4%	6%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

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## Industry

Over half of adult Neighborhood Nine residents work in professional services industries, such as education (29%), health (9%) and other professional services, such as research, engineering and architecture (16%).

### ***Economic Comparison: Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge***

<b><i>Industry</i></b>	<b><i>Neighborhood 9</i></b>	<b><i>Cambridge</i></b>
Agriculture, Mining	1%	0%
Construction	3%	3%
Manufacturing	9%	10%
Transportation/Communication	4%	4%
Wholesale/Retail Trade	8%	11%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6%	6%
Business & Repair Services	6%	6%
Personal, Entertainment & Recreation	4%	4%
Health services	9%	10%
Education services	29%	26%
Other professional services	16%	15%
Public administration	4%	4%

*Source: 1990 U.S. Census*

## Employment and Skill Matches

As part of the Atlantic Survey, neighborhood residents were polled about the “fit” between their job and their skills and education. Two-thirds of Neighborhood Nine respondents thought that their job matched their education level “very well”. About one in ten Neighborhood Nine residents noted that their job and skill level did not match very well. Residents North of Upland experienced job/skill mismatches at slightly higher levels, 15% compared to 10% for those living South of Upland Road.

Residents were also asked how well the jobs available in Cambridge fit their skills and education. Nearly half (48%) of Neighborhood Nine respondents felt this match was “very well.” For those living North of Upland Road, one quarter

said that job opportunities in Cambridge did not match their skills and abilities very well, compared with 15% of those South of Upland Road. Primary obstacles for moving into better work are the availability of suitable jobs (76%) and the need for more education and job training (59%). Two out of three respondents thought that career counseling and job placement would most help them move into better work, while one in three desired vocational training.

## Committee Discussions

Study Committee members initially discussed the myriad ways that each of them participated in the Cambridge economy. Nearly all present participated as consumers of products and services, while some were employed — or employers — in Cambridge as well. Taking part in cultural and educational activities was another facet of economic participation.

The Study Committee discussed the need for jobs, retail goods and business opportunities that meet the needs of all sectors of the community. While much needs to be done to help business sustain the community along these lines, there are important tools that the City can use to help Cambridge sustain its economic base. Members would like the City to improve tracking of business start-ups and closings along with analysis and corrective steps to respond to undue failure or relocation of firms from Cambridge. Programs to foster small business creation and success were discussed. Given the City’s competitive advantage in technology, Study Committee members wished to help small research and development firms recruit in the local work force, find appropriate sites and locate appropriate financing for growth.

Study Committee members were also concerned that the City maintain a healthy retail and industrial climate, while protecting residential areas. The concept of “sustainable development” entered these discussions. Study Committee members discussed sustainability in terms of the costs to the human and natural environment being addressed now rather than deferred to future

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generations. Discussion of potential tradeoffs in this area were conducted.

Members would like to ensure that Massachusetts Avenue not develop overly high concentrations of specific kinds of retail, becoming a “restaurant row” or a series of boutiques. Participants would like to encourage development of businesses that provide services reflecting the needs of residents of the surrounding neighborhood.

The need for an affordable supermarket for less affluent people was also stressed. Since the Fresh Pond Stop and Shop supermarket closed, many low-income families must now travel, by bus or by foot, outside the neighborhood (and the city) to shop. For example, Briston Arms tenants without a vehicle must take two buses to get to a grocery store.

The Study Committee also reviewed the gap between work opportunities and the skill and training level of some residents. They would like to see neighborhood residents take part in a needs assessment to determine appropriate training and

educational programs. Child care services should be expanded, as well, to enable wider parent participation in the workforce. Outreach for employment programs should be expanded to enable more residents to learn about and participate in training programs.

Neighborhood youth were of particular concern in the discussions. Study Committee members suggested creation of a scholarship fund involving local schools and businesses, as well as partnerships with training programs to develop work preparedness and skills building programs for Cambridge youth. A child care training program in collaboration with local universities and non-profits, such as the Child Care Resource Center, was recommended; members hoped that this could spawn home-based child care businesses. They also ventured the possibility of expanding the Neighborhood Four Summer Landscaping Program to Neighborhood Nine, allowing resident youth to care for neighborhood parks.



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# *Economic Development and Employment Recommendations*

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## **Economic Development and Employment Recommendations**

- I. The City should make the provision of employment opportunities for low-income residents one of its primary concerns.*
- II. The City should develop a small business development and retention program to protect small enterprises from being pushed out by big stores and chains.*
- III. Continue to expand the City's micro enterprise development program (through the Cambridge Business Development Center) to develop home-based businesses, especially among economically disadvantaged residents.*
- IV. Encourage a major grocery chain to locate in the neighborhood.*
- V. Conduct surveys of businesses to track their business needs.*
- VI. Expand the Cambridge Emerging Technology Partnerships Program.*
- VII. Encourage parking transportation policy consistent with sustainable neighborhoods.*
- VIII. Manage development of economic activity along Massachusetts Avenue, Concord Avenue and Alewife area while protecting the residential areas of the neighborhood.*
- IX. Reevaluate taxation on businesses with the intention of protecting smaller businesses in the City. Consider small business adjustments.*

## **EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

The Study Committee directs these recommendations to the city's Work Force Development Office and its training and placement partners.

- I. Conduct English as a Second Language classes at the Peabody and Fitzgerald Community Schools (using the Graham and Parks Community School as a model).*
- II. Create or expand existing job training programs for young adults, single mothers and other economically disenfranchised parts of the population.*
- II. Intensify outreach efforts so that residents can take advantage of training and placement services.*
- IV. Build partnerships with emerging technology companies to provide training or training opportunities for residents.*
- V. Explore ways for high school graduates from the neighborhood to pursue a post secondary education, including the creation of a scholarship fund involving local schools and businesses.*
- VI. Expand youth employment and career pathways initiatives.*
- VII. Provide the necessary transportation links needed for residents to access job training programs, especially area community colleges.*

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### **Growth Policy Context**

The Economic Development and Employment policies address the need for business and employment training support. The policies stress the importance of an inclusive job base and widened opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship to the city's diversity and vitality. Policies 42-44 outline the need for regulatory and policy

support to create new, innovative industries and retain existing ones that are suitable to Cambridge. Policy 46 encourages the development of entrepreneurship and minority businesses. Strengthening retail businesses within existing districts and squares is addressed by policies 47 and 48. Policies 40 and 41 state the City's commitment to job training services, with an accent on reaching residents who have not benefited previously.

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# Open Space

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## Background

Neighborhood Nine contains 70.3 acres of public open space, one of the largest amounts in any of the city's neighborhoods. The neighborhood also has some of the most diverse set of facilities found in the city serving a wide range of users. Most of the open space is located on the western side of the neighborhood.

The neighborhood contains some significant privately owned open space including the Radcliffe Quadrangle, the Harvard Observatory and the playing field behind the Friends School. For the most part, Neighborhood Nine parks are in good condition. The following is a summary of Neighborhood Nine parks:

### ***Corcoran Field/Raymond Street Park***

Located in the heart of the neighborhood, the city constructed this 2.7 acre park in 1914-1915. In 1931, the city Council named the park the Timothy F. Corcoran Field in memory of a World War I veteran who was born and raised in the neighborhood.

With the exception of the ball field, the city renovated the park completely in 1987, including replacing the play equipment and benches, resurfacing the basketball court and pathways, and planting additional trees.

The Study Committee felt there was a conflict between programming for City- wide users versus neighborhood users and expressed a desire to see the park become a focal point for the neighborhood by having more planned community activities take place in the park. The Study

Committee felt that physical improvements to the park could help foster increased community use of the park facilities, possibly adding benches, a gazebo, and additional lighting.

### ***Peabody School Playground***

Located behind the Peabody School, this 0.6 acre playground is rather spare with only a few features and some hard surface open space. The city installed the swings, the play structure and youth fitness center as part of its 1987 repairs. The Study Committee felt the playground needs to be completely renovated to soften the surface, while still accommodating the basketball and play structures.

### ***Danehy Park***

When the city dedicated the new park in honor of former Mayor Thomas W. Danehy in 1990, the 50 acre park expanded the city's open space by 20 percent. The park sits on a former clay pit and city dump. Clay extraction for brick making started in the 1840's and continued until 1952 when the New England Brick Company closed its operations and sold the land to the city. The city, in turn, used the clay pit as its primary dump site until 1971. At the start of the MBTA Red Line extension from Harvard Square to Alewife, the city arranged with the MBTA to dump 2,000,000 cubic yards of tunnel excavations to cap the dump and aid its conversion into a new city park. The city added more gravel and loam to create the new surface.

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The Study Committee members felt that added plantings where the park borders Briston Arms would provide privacy for residents and cut down on the wind tunnel effect. The Study Committee also felt there should be additional shaded areas and sitting areas in the park. Study Committee members encourage the city to consider eliminating the use of the methane leaching field as a dog run and identify an alternative site.

#### ***Roethlisberger Memorial Park***

Relatively small in comparison to its neighboring parks, Roethlisberger is a passive, almost contemplative place. The city, at the urging of the Neighborhood Nine Association, carved the park out of the edge of the city dump in the mid 1960's. In 1967 the city Council dedicated it in the memory of Margaret Roethlisberger, a resident highly active in civic affairs. In 1992, the city completed comprehensive renovations in the park, including new lighting, benches, plantings and resurfaced walks.

#### ***St. Peter's Field***

St. Peter's is one of the busiest ball fields in the city. St. Peter's Field was completely renovated in 1992 (in conjunction with Roethlisberger Park), featuring new lights, regaraged field and new sod.

#### ***Cambridge Common***

This 8.2 acre active and passive open space is the remnant of the much larger 17th century cow pasture used by Cambridge's first European settlers. The different buildings along its periphery are evidence of the many changes that Cambridge has undergone since the 17th century.

The city has upgraded some of the facilities in the Common in the past several years. The city developed a new lighting plan and installed new lights which both respect the historical nature of the park while seeking to enhance pedestrian safety. The city also rebuilt the tot lot in 1990. Also, several statues in the Common have undergone cleaning.

The Study Committee would like to see the city continue to study safe passage for pedestrians and bicycles in and around the Common.

#### ***Flagstaff Park***

Flagstaff Park is the 1.2 acre triangle of land dividing Massachusetts Avenue southeast of the Common. Strictly a visual amenity with no public access, the green space was rebuilt as part of the extension of the MBTA Red Line subway in 1983. At that time, the city regraded the area and installed new split rail fencing.

#### **Survey Results**

According to the 1993 Atlantic Marketing Research Company, Inc. telephone survey, overall, Neighborhood Nine residents feel well served by park land and facilities in the neighborhood. Across all demographic groups, the majority feel that the availability and condition of parks is either a minor concern or of no concern. Respondents' opinions regarding the availability of recreational facilities in the neighborhood did not differ much from opinions on the issues above.

#### **Committee Discussions**

The Study Committee identified four areas of concern; programming schedules, conflict between neighborhood uses and City-wide uses, dogs in parks, and public safety. Study Committee members felt that the fields, especially, tend to be too programmed and that they seem to be reserved for the use of organized leagues. The Study Committee felt there was little available field time for neighborhood pick-up ball games especially on summer evenings.

The Study Committee felt that Corcoran Field/Raymond Street Park, in particular, experienced conflicting uses. The Study Committee also cited poor drainage of the field, the lack of comfortable seating and maintenance issues at the edge of the field abutting Chetwynd Street as areas of concern. Study Committee members pointed out that gardeners have complained that the soft ball field is too small for adult play, and that batters some times hit balls into the garden. The Study Committee discussed the issue of dog owners allowing their pets to run off their leashes during restricted hours (very early or later at night) in Corcoran Field and agreed that strict

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enforcement of clean up regulations and animal control standards would have to be established before such a policy could be implemented.

The Study Committee also discussed public safety in the neighborhood parks. Study Commit-

tee members agreed that increased police patrols including periodic patrols on foot and on bicycles should be instituted in parks throughout the neighborhood.

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# Open Space Recommendations

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## Management/Administration/Maintenance

- I. Encourage Department of Public Works employees to be more vigilant about picking up spilled trash on scheduled trash removal day.*
- II. Add dog waste receptacles in parks and along streets in the neighborhood.*
- III. Encourage the creation of an "Adopt-A-Park" program in neighborhood parks.*
- IV. Neighborhood organizations and residents groups should organize a neighborhood clean-up day in conjunction with the Department of Public Works.*
- V. Encourage neighborhood organizations and residents groups to organize a trustees organization for the major parks in the neighborhood.*

These organizations would serve as conduits to raise funds on a charitable basis to enhance the utility and aesthetic quality of the parks.

## Planning, Programming, Design and Construction

- VI. Mitigate water pollution due to runoff into Alewife Brook/Little River and the Alewife Reservation.*
- VII. Seek opportunities to increase community open space. Add sites for community gardens and recreational use.*

- VIII. Study current policy of scheduling adult leagues in City fields/parks.*

## Railroad Crossing

- IX. Convert open lot next to railroad tracks at Walden Square into a passive park along with the renovation of the tunnel.*
- X. Improve Railroad Underpass.*

The Study Committee recommends widening and deepening the opening to the underpass. Study Committee members also suggest eliminating the steps, painting the space white, adding lights and installing a mirror at each end to enhance public safety, and planting flowers and shrubbery to improve the appearance of the underpass.

## Growth Policy Context

The city's Open Space policy #63 addresses the multiple use functions of recreational facilities, stressing that shared use "...should be encouraged, either through expansion of the existing inventory, through multiple use of existing facilities, or through creative programming of those facilities." Open Space policy #69 encourages the city to "retain and protect" existing private open space whether or not it is publicly accessible. Open Space policy #70 emphasizes that maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities "should be the city's highest fiscal priority with regard to open space and recreational facilities." The policy also calls for the city to explore ways to involve the private sector in maintenance of public open space and recreational facilities.



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# I N S T I T U T I O N S

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# *Institutions*

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## **Background**

Institutions play a singular role in the life and development of Cambridge and its neighborhoods. Institutions of education, government, health care, religion, non-profit services and scientific research occupy over half of the city's land and employ many of its residents. Educational institutions, primarily Harvard University, Radcliffe College and Lesley College, have the most direct impact on Neighborhood Nine. Their influence can be felt as educators, employers, land owners, developers and providers of cultural and community services. The academic community of students, faculty and staff also have impacts as tax-payers, consumers, tenants and homeowners. The institutions' scope and size demands careful planning and consultation involving the institutions, the city and neighborhood residents.

Educational institutions are among the city's largest landowners; the universities' academic and taxable land holdings comprise about 400 acres total, or 10% of the city's land. Twenty eight percent of the tax exempt land in Cambridge is university owned (the city is the largest owner of tax exempt land, at 46%). Twenty percent of Harvard's housing stock is in Neighborhood Nine. (See attached map which illustrates the location of institutional properties by type).

Properties owned by the institutions are used in a number of ways, with academic buildings and open spaces, such as the Radcliffe Quadrangle or the Cronkite Graduate Center, the most evident. University housing, such as Radcliffe dormitories

and graduate or affiliate housing such as the Botanical Gardens, are also a prominent feature in the neighborhood. The universities also maintain a portfolio of taxable property dedicated to private residential and commercial use. Research facilities, such as the Smithsonian Observatory, are another prominent use.

The institution's impacts can be felt when properties are acquired, constructed or altered, or if a change in use is instituted. Institutional expansion into residential and retail districts of Cambridge have sometimes raised concerns for residents, particularly in areas with a special character or identity, such as Harvard Square. In Neighborhood Nine, recent years have seen relatively little new activity by the institutions. Harvard erected a set of townhouse units, called Observatory Commons, on property purchased from Radcliffe College. Radcliffe has instituted no recent major additions in the neighborhood, though it has converted undergraduate dormitories into one and two family housing units.

Expanding institutions often result in taxable property being converted to tax exempt academic uses. This has become more of a concern as federal and state support have diminished, and service demands by the institutions for an expanding physical plant have increased. Voluntary agreements with the city, called payments-in-lieu of taxes (PILOT), are made by Harvard and other institutions to help compensate for these gaps.

Educational institutions make other contributions to the local and neighborhood economy. Higher education is the number one employer in

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the city and the largest employer of City (and Neighborhood Nine) residents. The institutions also provide cultural and social services to the city, such as lecture series and community service activities of Harvard undergraduates.

The institutions' physical activities are governed by the city's Zoning ordinance, including the Institutional Overlay districts. The Institutional Overlay allows the city some regulation over institutional uses outside their core areas. The city's Historical Commission also works closely with the institutions on land use issues. The Commonwealth's laws, however, limit the city's powers to regulate the institutions' design and building choices within the core academic properties.

Harvard has an entire department dedicated to physical planning, the Harvard Planning Group. The planning staff identify building priorities through the university's Capital Campaign, but the latter is not a Master Plan. Their control is limited by the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by the individual colleges and departments in the University's highly decentralized structure. This is particularly true of the Smithsonian Observatory, which is situated on Harvard owned land but staffed by employees contracting with the federal government.

Both Harvard and Radcliffe officials meet with city and neighborhood representatives to discuss specific projects and their impacts; Harvard also meets with the city Manager as part of its PILOT agreement. The 1991 Mayor's Report on Community-University relations, or "Town-Gown Report," called for expanding this type of dialogue. As a result of that recommendation, Harvard, city and neighborhood representatives meet on a monthly basis to discuss a variety of neighborhood/Harvard issues.

### **Survey Results**

Most survey respondents (two out of three) felt that Harvard had a positive impact on the neighborhood; 12% viewed the impact as negative and 23% saw no impact. Specific positive impacts include the addition of ethnic diversity; cultural, artistic and scientific activities, new buildings and

benefits to the local economy. Particular negative impacts included institutional expansion into the neighborhood, increased housing costs, and over-development.

A majority of respondents (70%) did not believe that Lesley College has had any significant impact on the neighborhood. A little over one fourth (28%) viewed Lesley's impact as positive, while just 2% felt it was negative.

### **Committee Discussions**

Representatives from Harvard's Planning Group and Government/Community Relations staff, as well as Radcliffe College, met with study committee study committee members to outline institutional holdings and policies. Study committee members were concerned with the degree of control that the university exerted over individual land use choices made in the neighborhood, such as at the Smithsonian Observatory. They were also interested in the institutions' forecasts for activities in the coming years. Both Harvard and Radcliffe representatives stated that little or no new building or acquisitions were expected for Neighborhood Nine. Radcliffe's priorities lie in reprogramming the Cronkite Graduate Center on Ash Street. None of Harvard's proposed projects in its Capital Campaign are in the neighborhood.

Study committee members wished to see Harvard limit expansion into residential areas "grandfathered" under prior zoning, or into commercially zoned areas. They supported both Harvard's and Radcliffe's efforts to meet with and discuss issues with neighborhood representatives during early phases of planning for new developments. (Radcliffe's representative noted its consultations with residents concerning issues such as curb cuts, color and drainage in its developments.) There is a need for consistent guidelines governing both the institutions' internal planning processes and their interaction with neighborhood residents. Institution representatives stressed that effective resident participation was critical to successful planning efforts, given the decentralized nature of communications and decision-making within the university.

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Tax impacts of the institutions were a strong concern for study committee members. Potential losses of revenue, and the subsequent burdens on tax payers, were discussed and debated. The city needs to monitor such trends carefully. A Harvard representative also noted during discussions that the institution's PILOT payments more than doubled during the decade 1980-1990. Statewide governance of town/gown relations was also discussed. It was noted that in certain other

states, such as Connecticut, localities are reimbursed by the state for hosting educational institutions.

Study Committee members also noted the need for the institutions to provide better maintenance of their holdings, such as prompt shoveling of snow from the sidewalks. They would also like to see expanded resident access to university resources such as libraries and athletic facilities.

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# *Institutions Recommendations*

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## **Harvard University and Radcliffe College**

- I. Harvard and Radcliffe should continue to work with the neighborhood during the early stages of planning for new construction. Harvard should improve their internal planning process to ensure optimum communication with the community*
- II. Harvard should confine their institutional uses to their existing grandfathered premises (when within residential areas) and to commercially zoned areas.*
- III. The University should continue and expand cleaning the sidewalks on their property.*
- IV. The Committee urges Harvard and Radcliffe to open up certain resources to the immediate neighborhood, especially the libraries and athletic facilities)*
- V. Establish a business mentoring program with the Harvard Business School*
- VI. The city's Committee on Community-University Relationships should actively track all tax exempt property, analyze loss to the city, make recommendations, lobby and encourage institutions to contribute more, and issue a yearly report.*

## **Lesley College**

- I. Undertake a master planning process including residents and the city and addressing such issues as physical expansion and traffic management. Encourage College's community relations office to do more outreach in the neighborhood.*

## **Growth Policy Context**

The limitation of institutions to their existing core or surrounding area, such as an overlay district, is stated in Policies 5 and 6. The need for mutual outreach and dialogue between the major institutions and the community is stipulated in Policy 49. That policy calls for both on-going dialogue and the creation by each institution of a master plan describing both existing status and strategies to meet future needs and goals.



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# C O N C L U S I O N

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## *Conclusion*

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This report reveals that Neighborhood Nine faces a variety of challenges which are addressed throughout the report. The report offers several recommendations to improve the quality of life for all residents in the neighborhood. The city has taken action to implement some recommendations made the study committee.

The city is planning roadway and landscape design improvements in Porter Square. The proposed improvements include installation of traffic control devices, addition of street trees and general landscape improvements, and design of bicycle lanes. Construction is scheduled for 1998.

The city is monitoring renovations and changes which have been proposed by the owners of the Porter Square shopping center facility which lies within the Massachusetts Avenue overlay district. The overlay district was created to encourage “a consistent image for the develop-

ment along the Avenue and adjacent areas”.

A committee composed of city staff and representatives from groups having a particular interest in the Cambridge Common has submitted a set of recommendations to the City Council to improve travel access through the Common. The recommendations include a request for funding to hire a project designer to implement a plan which would include retaining safe pedestrian access to the Common, preserving existing healthy trees and adding new trees, and retaining desired bicycle travel routes through the Common.

The remaining recommendations will be incorporated into the city’s decision-making process on future improvements in Neighborhood Nine.

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# A P P E N D I X I

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# Housing

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## Background

Neighborhood Nine has a total of 5495 housing units densely distributed at 26 units per acre. One in four (27%) of the units are located in condominium buildings and 28% are located in privately owned multifamily buildings. Neighborhood Nine's four subsidized housing developments have 478 housing units, which constitute 9% of the total housing units in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Nine has had a larger percentage of home owners than the City of Cambridge both in 1980 and 1990. The percentage of residents owning their own home in Neighborhood Nine rose substantially from 25% in 1980 to 34% in 1990 while the city's ownership rate rose from 23% in 1980 to 30% in 1990. The single family and condominium sales price in Neighborhood Nine has more than doubled between 1984 and 1992. The single family sales price rose from \$170,000 to \$356,000 and the condominium price increased from \$74,900 to \$168,000.

## NON PROFIT HOUSING INITIATIVES

### Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA)

The CHA owns and operates two developments in Neighborhood Nine: 60 units of family housing on Lincoln Way and a 24 unit development on Linnaean Street reserved for elderly residents.

### City Housing Programs

City housing programs include home improvement and home ownership programs, multifamily rehabilitation programs, and support for affordable

housing development initiatives (*See Appendix for list of City housing programs*).

## Federal Housing Programs

Neighborhood Nine has two housing developments (Briston Arms and Walden Square) which were originally developed in the 1970's under a federal housing program that provided owners of apartment buildings with low-interest, 40-year mortgages. In return, the owners agreed to keep rents affordable for low- and moderate-income residents. Unfortunately, provisions in these loans allowed owners to prepay the mortgages after 20 years and terminate the affordability restrictions.

In 1990, the federal government established a preservation program to protect the long-term affordability of these projects. Currently, the federal preservation program (also known as the expiring use program) is undergoing major modifications. The modifications will allow owners to prepay their mortgages and convert properties to market-rate housing. The changes may also affect the project-based Section 8 subsidy program.

Bristol Arms has participated in the Federal Preservation Program, and its affordability is ensured through 2018. In September 1994, the city played a key role in facilitating an agreement between the owner of Briston Arms, tenants of the development, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). The owner has agreed to invest a substantial sum in physical improvements to the property. The 240-



unit Waden Square development faces risks to its long-term affordability. The owner may be able to prepay the federally-insured mortgage, but an affordable use restriction will remain in place for the original 40-year term. The City is monitoring the federal agreements related to affordability.

A third federally-assisted housing development, Walden Park Apartments, received federal mortgage insurance, and in return, HUD regulated the rents. While not specifically targeted for low- and moderate-income tenants, the rent regulation kept the rents low and affordable for lower income households. In 1995, HUD deregulated the property as allowed under the program regulations. The tenants contested the decision, which was upheld after a HUD review. In 1996, the City's Board of Zoning Appeal has determined that the owner is obligated to establish below-market rents as a condition for the original zoning variances granted to the project. The owner is challenging this decision.

## Survey Results

The 1993 Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc. telephone survey revealed that the majority of low-income residents call for more rental opportunities, whereas a majority of moderate-income respondents say home ownership opportunities are needed more. One out of five high-income respondents felt that neither type of housing was needed.

### *Housing Opportunities Needed (by Income)*

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
More Rental Housing	60%	27%	47%	24%
More Home Ownership	23%	58%	14%	39%
Both Needed	16%	14%	37%	16%
None/Neither	1%	1%	3%	21%

*Source: Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc.  
(telephone survey, 1993)*

The majority of respondents see both rental costs and housing prices as a major concern in the neighborhood. Fifty-two percent of the respondents listed displacement as a major concern. As

income increases, the proportion of residents who see this as a major concern in the neighborhood decreases.

### *Concerns About Displacement Due to High Housing Costs (by Income)*

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
Major Concern	72%	72%
	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
Minor Concern	40%	41%

*Source: Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc.  
(telephone survey, 1993)*

Eight-four percent of respondents do not think they can afford to buy a house in Neighborhood Nine. Fifty-eight percent of high income renters said they could not afford to buy a house in the neighborhood.

Survey respondents listed housing prices, displacement due to high housing costs, and rental costs as the major housing concerns in the neighborhood.

## Committee Discussions

The Study Committee discussed the various ways that affordable housing is made available in the city. There was a discussion about both the advantages of developing home ownership projects versus rental programs and the most cost effective way to provide residents with affordable housing.

The Study Committee differed on the best way to maintain an economically diverse resident population in the city. It was suggested that rental resources would be adversely affected if the City continues to expand home ownership programs. The Study Committee emphasized the need for the City to tap into whatever housing funds are available and to create a balance between affordable rental and home ownership opportunities. The Study Committee agreed that affordable housing programs should be geared towards resident families who need access to a variety of housing choices in order to continue living in the City.

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# *Housing Recommendations*

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***I. The City should continue limited-equity home ownership programs to promote home ownership for residents with low- and moderate-incomes.***

***II. The City should identify properties within the neighborhood that may provide opportunities for limited equity development.***

- . lot near Bellis Circle
- . storage site on Concord Avenue
- . “bird house” on Walden Street

***III. The City should identify distressed properties that may provide opportunities for rehabilitation and conversion into affordable housing.***

***IV. The City should support policies and programs that offer equitable solutions for expiring use housing and would not force residents to leave the City because of housing costs.***

***V. The City should consider giving floor area ratio (FAR) bonuses to owners of proposed mixed-use developments located in commercial districts which include a significant low-income housing component.***

***VI. The City should consider giving FAR bonuses to developers who build multiple-unit housing with deed restrictions requiring the housing to maintain affordable occupancy.***

***VII. Encourage the construction of low-income housing where possible on appropriate sites.***

***VIII. Continue to invest in home rehabilitation programs.***

## **Growth Policy Context**

Housing policy #29 encourages the city to concentrate its rehabilitation efforts on existing housing stock which will provide housing for low- and moderate-income resident families. Housing policy #31 encourages the promotion of affordable housing opportunities whenever feasibly possible.

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# *City of Cambridge*

## *Affordable Housing Activities*

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The City of Cambridge has an ongoing commitment to the preservation of existing affordable housing and the creation of new affordable home ownership and rental opportunities. The City's ability to accomplish this depends on a number of factors: primarily identification of resources to develop additional affordable units and rehabilitate existing units. Other factors include market and inventory conditions, the availability of sites, the capacity of local housing providers and support for local programs and initiatives.

Scarcity of vacant land in Cambridge necessitates that affordable housing opportunities come from existing stock. Affordable housing initiatives may take the form of stabilizing existing housing occupied by low and moderate income households or converting buildings to nonprofit or public ownership and providing access to affordable units to low and moderate income households upon turnover. They may also involve rehabilitating buildings in distressed conditions with vacancies and substantial capital needs for occupancy after rehab by low and moderate income households.

An important public benefit of many of Cambridge's housing initiatives is securing long-term affordability, either through limited equity restrictions, public or nonprofit ownership or via long-term contracts and deed restrictions with private owners. Large public investments are typically required to secure affordable units, therefore, making these units affordable in the long-term is the most efficient way to use scarce housing resources.

Approximately one million dollars, a sizable percentage of the City's CDBG funds, is spent on housing. In addition, the City receives approximately \$700,000 of federal HOME funds. The housing funds are administered through the City's Community Development Department (CDD). Along with supplying administrative support and program funds to the local nonprofit housing development agencies, CDD provides multi-family rehabilitation funds, first-time home buyer assistance, development funds and technical assistance for substantial rehabilitation and new construction for the benefit of low and moderate income households.

### **ONGOING HOUSING PROGRAMS**

#### ***Development***

**Affordable Housing Trust:** CDD staff provide technical assistance to the Affordable Housing Trust, a trust fund established by a local zoning ordinance to develop and sustain affordable housing with funds received under incentive zoning provisions. The City Manager is the managing trustee, and the other board members include representatives from different sectors of the community concerned with housing policy, including city agencies, nonprofit housing organizations and community representatives. The Trust has played an important role in leveraging other financing for affordable housing projects. Since its inception, Trust funds have supported the development of 405 units of housing. In addition, the Trust also acts as the local housing

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partnership entity and is charged with the review and approval of all applications for funding from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.

**HOME Program:** CDD administers the HUD-funded HOME Program. HOME funds are used to rehabilitate rental properties such as the Cambridge YMCA, as well as those that owned and managed by Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). HOME funds can also be used for acquisition and new construction of affordable rental and home ownership units, such as those at the Hampshire-Columbia Street site. The City has contracted with Just A Start and Homeowners Rehab to operate a HOME-funded home improvement type program. This will benefit single family owner-occupied properties and two or three family buildings where HOME funds can be used in conjunction with CDBG funds. The HOME program has also been successful in reducing the acquisition cost of Cambridge properties to ensure their affordability to low income first-time home buyers.

**Expiring Use Activities:** The City of Cambridge has over 1,600 units in eight federally-subsidized developments facing the risk of expiring use restrictions or rent subsidies during the 1990s. CDD actively works with tenants, owners and other concerned parties to address the long-term needs of these affordable housing developments. The CDD provides technical assistance to help tenant groups to organize, to preserve affordability and maintain housing quality, and, in certain cases, to work with a local nonprofit organization to acquire their buildings.

## **Rehabilitation**

**Harvard Emergency Loan Program:** The Harvard Emergency Loan Program, administered by the CDD, provides low interest rate loans to help owners of rent controlled properties to rehabilitate their buildings.

**Home Improvement Program:** Cambridge's Home Improvement Program (HIP) gives technical assistance and reduced rate loans to low

income, often elderly owners of one to four family buildings. By making relatively small investments in critical rehab needs, the program allows low and moderate income owners to remain in their homes. Funded primarily through CDBG and revolving loans, the program is operated by two agencies, Just A Start and Homeowner's Rehab Inc., under contract with the CDD. Between 100 and 150 units are rehabilitated annually through this program.

**Rehab Assistance Program:** The Rehab Assistance Program (RAP) is funded with CDBG funds and private sources. The program provides training and education for youth rehab and deleading crews which provide labor for HIP cases and affordable housing projects at cost.

**Multifamily Loan Programs:** Cambridge's continuing multifamily loan programs are managed by the Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Services (CNAHS), a private nonprofit corporation. CNAHS operates a rehab program for investor-owner rental buildings, providing low-interest loans and technical assistance to encourage reinvestment in the multifamily stock. Operating support for this program is provided by CDBG funds, leveraging loan funds from state and private sources. Two loan programs funded by HUD and administered by the City - The Rental Rehabilitation Program and the 312 Loan Program - were phased out in 1991.

## **Lead-Safe Cambridge**

In 1994, Cambridge received a federal grant under the HUD Lead-based Paint Hazard Reduction Grant Program to abate 300 privately owned residential units over a two year period. The grant will be administered through the Lead Safe Cambridge program.

## **Home Ownership**

**Cambridge Condo Buyers Initiative:** The Cambridge Condo Buyer Initiative is a new City sponsored affordable home ownership program for low and moderate income Cambridge residents.

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The Buyer Initiative will provide technical and financial assistance to income eligible residents who want to buy a condo in Cambridge.

**Limited Equity Cooperatives and Condominiums:**

The Resident Cooperative Ownership Program, in partnership with nonprofit housing agencies, provides technical, legal and financial assistance to tenant groups seeking to buy and renovate their buildings and convert them to limited equity cooperatives and condominiums. In addition to providing development assistance, the program advocates for funding for new projects and provides management support to established coops. The City will expand this program if suitable sites and funding are available. A Share Loan Program was recently established to help low and moderate income residents buy into existing cooperatives.

**Home buyer Counseling:** Beginning in August 1993, the City began offering home buyer counseling courses to Cambridge residents. Potential buyers attend four two-hour sessions covering issues such as credit, finding a home, qualifying for a mortgage and the purchase process. Over 40 households successfully completed the first course, and 45 are currently participating in a course offered this month. Participation gives buyers access to low cost mortgages through the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency and local banks.

**Technical Assistance and Services**

**Assistance to Nonprofit Development Organizations:**

The local nonprofit housing development agencies play a key role in the Cambridge housing delivery system. Cambridge is fortunate to have several stable and experienced agencies which have been integrally involved in the delivery of affordable housing for many years. Three agencies, Just A Start, Corp., Homeowner's Rehab., Inc., and Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Services, Inc., have extensive experience in all levels of rehabilitation and also in management of multifamily stock. CNAHS, which has a partnership-model board composed of lenders, city housing officials, property owners

and tenants, also has special expertise in dealing with the rent controlled stock. Cambridge and Somerville Cooperative Apartment Project (CASCAP) concentrates on the delivery of housing to the mentally disabled population. CASCAP has strengths in both rehabilitation and development and in the management of group homes/single room occupancy dwellings with a social service component. The CDD provides technical and operating support for these agencies and also provides loans and grants from CDBG funds to nonprofit organizations to support acquisition and development of affordable units.

Nonprofit agencies developed 375 units of affordable housing in Cambridge in FY93, including affordable rental units and SRO units for people with AIDS and other special needs. We project that nonprofit will develop 360 additional units in FY94.

**Housing Access Services:** The CDD in cooperation with nonprofit agencies, provides housing access services for low and moderate income households. These services include maintaining a list of households interested in affordable housing opportunities. The Department recently computerized this system, and will expand it during the coming year. CDD is also responsible for administering the resale of limited equity units, where deed restrictions limit the price and target the availability of these units to low income buyers. For these units, as well as for other affordable units, the Department also provides marketing assistance to both nonprofit and for profit developers and owners to help them locate low or moderate income purchasers or renters.

**Housing Intercept Program:** The Cambridge Housing Intercept Program (formerly the Cambridge Housing Services Program), is a program that provides counselling and information services for owners and tenants, and mediation services to try to resolve disputes over tenancies. This program has proved to be very effective in keeping tenants in their housing, thereby preventing homelessness in over 200 cases annually. This program is jointly funded by the CDD and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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## **OTHER INITIATIVES**

**Inclusionary Zoning:** In certain parts of the City, like North Point and the south of Pacific area of Cambridgeport, the City Council has enacted zoning that requires that a percentage of the units developed in any residential project be affordable. Over time, this zoning initiative will result in mixed-income housing being created.

**Fair Housing:** Since 1981, HUD has periodically funded the Cambridge Community Housing

Resource Board (CHRB) which was established to promote equal housing opportunities for all regardless of race or ethnic background. The Cambridge CHRB's programs have been administered by CDD staff and have included real estate scholarships for minorities and a Fair Housing curriculum at the high school. When HUD funding ended, a citywide Fair Housing Commission was established to promote fair housing.

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# A P P E N D I X I I

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# *Growth Policy*

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## **Land Use Policies**

### ***Policy #1***

Existing residential neighborhoods, or any portions of a neighborhood having an identifiable and consistent built character, should be maintained at their prevailing pattern of development and building density and scale.

### ***Policy #2***

Except in evolving industrial areas, the city's existing land use structure and the area of residential and commercial neighborhoods should remain essentially as they have developed historically.

### ***Policy #4***

Adequate transitions and buffers between differing scales of development and differing uses should be provided; general provisions for screening, landscaping and setbacks should be imposed while in especially complex circumstances special provisions should be developed.

### ***Policy #5***

The major institutions, principally Lesley College, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the hospitals, should be limited to those areas that historically have been occupied by such uses and to abutting areas that are reasonably suited to institutional expansion, as indicated by any institutional overlay district formally adopted by the city.

### ***Policy #6***

For such institutions reasonable densities should be permitted in their core campuses to forestall unnecessary expansion into both commercial districts and low-density residential neighborhoods.

### ***Policy #9***

The evolution of the city's industrial areas should be encouraged, under the guidance of specific urban design plans, and through other public policy and regulations such that: 1) those areas can adapt to new commercial and industrial patterns of development 2) the residential neighborhood edges abutting such areas are strengthened through selective residential reuse within the development areas or through careful transition in density, scale and lot development pattern 3) new uses and varied scales and densities can be introduced into such areas, 4) uses incompatible with the city's existing and future desired development pattern are phased out.

### ***Policy #10***

In some evolving industrial areas multiple uses should be encouraged, including an important component of residential use in suitable locations not subject to conflict with desired industrial uses, to advance other development policy objectives of the city: 1) to provide opportunities for those who work in the city to live here, 2) to limit the use of the automobile to get to Cambridge and to travel within Cambridge, 3) to encourage more active

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use of all parts of the city for longer periods throughout the day; and 4) to limit the secondary impacts of new development on the existing, established neighborhoods. These impacts may be both economic, as in the increased demand placed on the limited stock of existing housing, and environmental, as in the increase in traffic on neighborhood streets.

***Policy #12***

Those necessary or desirable uses and activities which require specially tailored environments should be provided for and those uses, activities and development patterns which create distinctive environments that serve as amenities for the whole community should be protected or maintained. For example, low-rent industrial space for start-up enterprises, locations for industrial use and development which could be compromised by proximity to other, incompatible, uses, including residential uses, small commercial enclaves which directly serve their immediate surrounding residential neighborhood, locations appropriate for gas stations, car repair facilities, tow yards, etc.; structures or clusters of structures eligible for local historic district designation, or for designation as a local conservation district; environments, as frequently found in the Residence "A" districts, where a unique combination of distinctive architecture and landscaped open space prevails; areas designated or eligible as national register historic districts.

**Transportation Policies**

***Policy #19***

Investigate the feasibility of developing and implementing, within the financial resources of the city, a paratransit system, utilizing taxi cabs where appropriate, in order to supplement the current MBTA system in Cambridge.

***Policy #20***

Encourage the state transportation and environmental agencies to develop a regional goods movement plan; in the meantime, use the city's

limited authority as much as possible to route truck traffic around rather than through residential neighborhoods.

***Policy #21***

Discourage vehicle travel through residential areas both by providing roadway improvements around the neighborhoods' perimeters and by operational changes to roadways which will impeded travel on local streets.

***Policy #22***

Undertake reasonable measures to improve the functioning of the city's street network, without increasing through-capacity, to reduce congestion and noise and facilitate bus and other non-automobile circulation. However, minor arterials with a residential character should be protected whenever possible.

***Policy #23***

Encourage all reasonable forms of nonautomobile travel including, for example, making improvements to the city's infrastructure which would promote bicycling and walking.

***Policy #34***

Cambridge's evolving industrial areas are a valuable resource whose mix of uses must be carefully planned over the next 20 years.

***Policy #35***

Appropriate development in the city's evolving industrial areas should be encouraged to maintain the city's overall economic health, to expand the tax base, and expand job opportunities for Cambridge residents.

***Policy #38***

Within clearly established limits, land use regulations in the evolving industrial areas should recognize the need for flexibility of use - as for instance between office, research, and light manufacturing activities - and provide for a wide range of density options throughout the city

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including those which foster research and development and start-up operations.

***Policy #39***

Development patterns in all nonresidential areas must be planned to minimize negative impact on abutting residential neighborhoods.

**Housing Policies**

***Policy #29***

Encourage rehabilitation of the existing housing stock. Concentrate city funds and staff efforts on rehabilitation that will provide units for low- and moderate-income residents.

***Policy #31***

Promote affordable home ownership opportunities where financially feasible.

**Economic Development and Employment Policies**

***Policy #40***

The city should actively assist its residents in developing the skills necessary for them to take full advantage of the city's changing economic makeup and to provide the personnel resources which would make Cambridge a desirable place to locate and expand.

***Policy #41***

The benefits of a strong employment base should be extended to portions of the resident population that have not benefited in the past; the city should support appropriate training programs that advance this objective.

***Policy # 42***

While recognizing some of the disadvantages of any urban location for many kinds of manufacturing activities, the city should make every effort to retain and recruit a wide range of enterprises suitable for a Cambridge location, presently, or in

the future as manufacturing processes evolve and change. Where possible the disadvantages should be minimized and the real advantages strengthened for manufacturing activities that can widen the city's job base and solidify its economic vitality.

***Policy #43***

The city should establish the regulatory environment and provide the support necessary to encourage the establishment of manufacturing activities for which the city may be a suitable location in the future.

***Policy #44***

The city should actively cultivate a regulatory and policy environment that assists in the retention of existing industries, supports the creation of new businesses and the innovative thinking that precedes it, retains an inventory of low-cost space necessary for fledgling enterprises, and fosters and innovative environment where entrepreneurship thrives.

***Policy #46***

The diversity, quality, and vigor of the city's physical, ethnic, cultural, and educational environment should be nurtured and strengthened as a fundamental source of the city's economic viability. More specifically, minority businesses and economic entrepreneurship should be encouraged.

***Policy #47***

Existing retail districts should be strengthened; new retail activity should be directed toward the city's existing retail squares and corridors.

***Policy #48***

Retail districts should be recognized for their unique assets, opportunities, and functions, and those aspects should be encouraged, in part to assure that they can compete with regional shopping centers and maintain their economic vitality.

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## **Urban Design and Environment Policies**

### ***Policy #60***

Urban design and environmental standards should be developed for all areas of the city which are or may be in the future subject to redevelopment or significant new development.

### ***Policy #62***

As transitions between differing uses are extremely important in a densely developed city, urban design standards should be developed to ensure that these transitions are made properly, respecting the maximum extent possible the needs of each contrasting use.

## **Open Space Policies**

### ***Policy #63***

Open space and recreational facilities serving a wide range of functions and clientele, including the elderly and special needs populations, should be encourage, either through expansion of the existing inventory, through multiple use of existing facilities, or through creative programming of those facilities.

### ***Policy #66***

New open space facilities, including larger ones for organized activities, should be considered for those private developments where the size of the development, the amount of land area and/or the ownership patterns provide the flexibility to accommodate such a facility without loss of economic value for other uses.

### ***Policy #69***

the city should encourage the permanent retention and protection of useful, effective, attractive private open space whether publicly accessible or not. Community use of private recreational and open space facilities in the city should be encouraged at reasonable levels where the private function of those facilities would not be impaired and where the recreational activity provided by the private facility is not well served in available public facilities.

### ***Policy #70***

Repair, maintenance and timely upgrading of existing facilities should be the city's highest fiscal priority with regard to open space and recreational facilities. The city should explore, and adopt as appropriate, mechanism whereby the private sector can reasonably provide, assist in and/or contribute to the maintenance of publicly useable open space and recreational facilities.

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